THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Coffee prices were depressed during the last 3-4 years. However, prices have recovered in recent months.

(b) In order to provide relief to coffee growers, the Government of India has approved a package which is aimed at debt amelioration. The package envisages equal sharing of total interest burden of Rs. 287.10 crore on Special Coffee Term Loan (SCTL) during the three year moratorium period amongst the banks, the Government and the grower loanees to the extent of one-third each; requesting the banks to lower the interest rates charged on SCTL from existing 11% to 9% or rate applicable to agriculture sector whichever is lower, during the remaining repayment period of SCTL loans; writing off of coffee developmental loans along with interest amounting to around Rs. 24 crore, due from the Coffee Board to the Government of India (The Coffee Board will in turn waive the old developmental loans amounting to around Rs. 64.59 crore extended by the Board to the coffee growers having holdings below 10 hectares only) and also continuing the interest subsidy scheme on working capital loans for small growers (below 10ha) at the rate of 5% and large growers at rate of 3% for the remaining years of the Tenth Plan. The interest subsidy would be reduced by 1% for a period of 3 years in the case of those growers who receive the benefit of reduced interest burden on SCTL during the moratorium period.

(c) to (e) The Government has taken adequate steps to disseminate the information relating to Coffee Relief Package and the package has been generally welcomed by the coffee growers.

Backlog of vacancies of SCs, STs and OBCs

253. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of backlog of vacancies of SCs, STs and OBCs separately in his Ministry and its subordinate offices as on 30th June, 2005, category-wise; and

(b) the necessary steps being taken by Government to fill up these vacant posts of the above-mentioned categories?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.